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Opinion/Feature | 2 November 2015 22:54 CET

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## Every pastor who collects tithes is a thief

By Femi Aribisala

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As far as many pastors are concerned, the most important scripture of all is not to be found in the word of Jesus. Neither is it even in the New Testament. That scripture says: "Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house, and try me now in this," says the LORD of hosts, 'If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.'" (Malachi 3:10).

This scripture is drummed repeatedly into Christians on Sundays. However, the only time Jesus mentioned tithing in scripture, he pointed out that it was not a weighty matter of the law. (Matthew 23:23). Hebrews says people only receive tithes "according to the law." (Hebrews 7:5). It then insists tithing (and everything else under the law) has been annulled: "The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless." (Hebrews 7:18-19). Nevertheless, mercenary pastors continue to insist on the payment of tithes.

### Latter-day Pharisees

Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for keeping part instead of the whole law. (Matthew 23:23). That is what tithe-collecting pastors do today. If we insist our congregants must pay tithes, we must also insist that they keep the rest of the law. James says: "Whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all." (James 2:10). Therefore, if we insist on tithing, we should also refrain from eating pork. We should stone adulterers, execute homosexuals, kill Sabbath violators and restore blood-sacrifices.

Tithe-collecting pastors counter this by maintaining the payment of tithes pre-dated the law. Here Abraham is cited as the cardinal example of someone who paid tithes before the promulgation of the Law of Moses, as did Jacob, his grandson. However, such arguments are disingenuous.

Before the law, tithing was at best an example but not a commandment. Moreover, pastors fail to mention that Abraham only tithed once in his lifetime. When he did, he did not even tithe his own money: he tithed the spoils of war. He gave ten percent of the plunder he took when he rescued Lot to Melchisedec, king of Salem. But then he did not even keep the rest but returned it (all ninety percent) to the king of Sodom.



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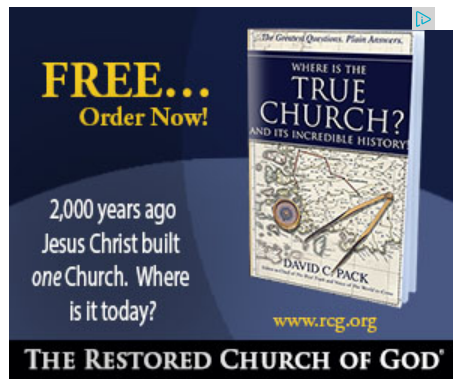
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For his part, Jacob also tithed only once. He did this in a "let's make a deal" arrangement he offered to God: "Jacob made a vow, saying, 'If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God. And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that you give me I will surely give a tenth to you.'" (Genesis 28:20-22). This kind of deal about accepting God only under certain self-serving conditions should certainly not be a term of reference for any serious believer.

### Lies upon lies

The first lie pastors tell Christians is what some have referred to as "the eleventh commandment:" "Thou shalt pay thy tithes to thy local church." But the bible says no such thing. The storehouse of Malachi was not a church. It was a place where food was kept.

Pastors hide from church-members the fact that money was not acceptable as tithe. The tithe was a tenth of the seed and fruit of the land and of the animals which ate of the land. (Leviticus 27:30-32). That is why God says: "Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be FOOD in my house." (Malachi 3:10). He does not say "that there may be MONEY in my house." The food was used to feed the Levites, the poor, widows, orphans and strangers.



Pastors also conveniently fail to teach the biblical tithe. The principles of tithing were not laid down by Malachi. They were laid down by Moses. The study of Moses' guidelines quickly reveals that the biblical tithe has no application whatsoever to Christians and is mischievously violated by tithe-collecting pastors today.

According to the Law of Moses, the tithe was divided into three allocations. The first year, it was given to the Levite. The second year, it was given to widows, orphans and the poor. The third year, it was eaten in the company of the faithful before the Lord as thanksgiving for his faithfulness. (Deuteronomy 14:22-28). In the seventh year, there was no planting and no reaping and therefore no tithing.

So the next time your pastor asks you to pay tithe, ask him about the seventh-year reprieve. Also ask him if you can give your tithe to the orphanage, or bring it as food items to be eaten in church. Believe me; he will not agree with you because it is your money he is after.

### Inapplicability of tithes

Tithing was only applicable to Jews and to the land of Israel. When large populations of Jews lived in Babylon, Ammon, Moab, Egypt, and Syria, these lands became tithe-able lands. However, tithes were not acceptable from strictly Gentile lands. So you need to ask your pastor how come he is collecting tithes in Nigeria.

Servants or slaves who worked on the land did not tithe because the land did not belong to them. Since only agricultural and animal resources were included, a fisherman gave no tithe of his fisheries. Neither did a miner or a carpenter pay tithes, nor anyone from the various professional occupations. So if you are not a farmer or a keeper of livestock, tell your 419 pastor tithing is biblically inapplicable to you.

Moreover, the only people authorised to receive tithes were the Levites. (Hebrews 7:5). So if your Pastor is a "tithe-collector," ask him if he happens to be a Jew. Remind him that, even though a Jew, Jesus could not receive the tithe because he was not from the tribe of Levi but from that of Judah.

The trick, of course, is for pastors today to claim we are "Levites." If your pastor is one such dissembler, ask him if he lives as a Levite. Remind him that Levites had no land and did not have private property. Ask him also how he knows he is from the tribe of Levi, which happens to be one of the lost tribes of Israel. Point out to him that even Jewish rabbis don't claim to be Levites today because all Jewish genealogical records were lost with the destruction of the Temple in AD 70, ensuring that it is no longer possible to ascertain the true identity of Levites.

Therefore, if Jews no longer tithe because the Levites are a lost tribe, how can Christian pastors collect tithes when we are not even Jewish, how much more Levites? If Jewish rabbis, whose terms of reference remain the Old Testament no longer collect tithes, then pastors who insist Christians are under a New Testament have no business doing so.

The conclusion then is inescapable. Every pastor who collects tithes is nothing but "a thief and a robber." (John 10:1).

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**Josh...B.Th, M.A | 11/3/2015 12:14:00 AM**

I have never read such plain faced rubb\*\*h in my life. The writer(Femi) needs to go back to school and start from class one.

[Reply](#)

**Kobie | 11/3/2015 12:35:00 AM**

As a Christian I keep a vow to bring a tenth of my increase to God.....'that there might be food in the storehouse of the Lord'. Of course my church encourage us to pay tithes to support Church administration, that notwithstanding it becomes an individual ritual based on faith.....to show appreciation to God with our substance! The new testament is replete with instances where the brethren brought supplies to serve the needs of the apostles. It is instructive to note that in modern day church organization, tithing is institutionalized for purposes of accounting and administration. It is up the individual congregant based on his faith level to "worship God with his substance" by prayerfully and consistently practicing tithing. God still loves a cheerful giver! And will reward accordingly, no matter what happens to the proceed of the tithe given at any time.

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**Kofi Twentoh | 11/3/2015 2:34:00 AM**

No matter how good the intentions of this writer, I guess by his blanket labeling of the pastors who practice tithing as thieves is very pathetic and unfortunate; it is borne out of the spirit of condemnation and pride. I would need to research in order to give an adequate response to this article but suffice it to state the following: 1. The word "tithe" just means 1/10th of the blessings. 2. Even in the Old Testament both tithing and offering were required. The two practice was among the various means God requires to bless His people. Before I say anything else, let me ask the writer: Is he a Christian? Does he believe in giving anything be it farm produce or cash to his church or organization? What fraction of his income or blessings does he give to his organization? If he is not a Christian or even a Jehovah's Witness, I say he better shut up because his own conscience betrays him. Let me say this: I don't have a problem if somebody preaches that tithing is an outmoded Old Testament practice, because such a fellow would genuinely believe in and practice giving both as a basis of expecting blessings from God or in just to support his organization. I would like to say even though Jesus mentioned tithe briefly He did not condemn it but recommended it by saying: "these you aught have done in addition to the tithing" (emphasis mine). Jesus rather had a problem with the hypocrisy of the Jewish religious who placed more emphasis on tithing than acts of kindness to their close relatives and the poor in the society. You may call it tithe today but if whatever you give today to your church or organization is a tenth fraction of your blessings or income I put it to you; it is tithe. If it is more than a tenth it is called tithe and offering. The only church which teaches very hard against tithing rather encourages their congregation not to bind themselves with the tithe or the tenth part but rather give more than the tenth because it is their assertion that we are required to do better in the New Testament because we have a better covenant today. I can't agree more, but I am saddened by the hidden hypocrisy in condemning tithing and turning round to require more from your congregation. Tithing is not the basis for salvation except you believe in salvation by works; it is also not the basis acceptance by God neither is it proof of righteousness or holiness, but the greatest effect of tithing or giving whatever percentage of your income to God is personal. That is the reason people continue to tithe despite such attacks. Who instructed Abraham to give tithe of what to who? Who instructed Jacob to promise to tithe of all to God? Before it became a law, it was a practice. I perceive tithing was a practice because it did not come out of the blue for these patriarchs to resort to tithing. Could Jesus have paid tithe, since he was a Jew and attended synagogue? I shall come again on this topic.

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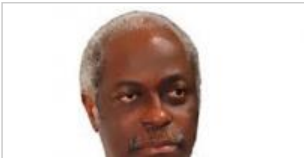
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